(c) and (d) As per the mandate of Central Tobacco Research Institute (CTRI), the Institute is supplying pure seeds of the recommended tobacco varieties and is meeting the demand and requirements of the farmers as well as commercial nursery growers. The supply of seedlings is free of cost to Seed Producing Farmers with an understanding to collect the pure seed from those fields. CTRI has also supplied tobacco seedlings to the farmers on cost basis after meeting the requirements of Seed Producing farmers. The demand and requirements of Seed Producing farmers. The demand and requirements have been met fully. The CTRI directs its scientists through its various extension activities to advise farmers and commercial nursery growers to produce quality seedlings. This is a continuous process and an approved activity of the CTRI.

Reclassification of Posts of Senior and Junior Hindi Translators in the ICAR

2101. SHRI M.A. BABY: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that 170th Governing Body Meeting of ICAR approved reclassification of posts of Senior Hindi Translator/Hindi Translator/Junior Hindi Translator as 'Technical';

(b) whether it is also a fact that the President of ICAR Society had given his consent for implementation of decisions of the said Governing Body in respect of all items;

(c) whether in the implementation order dated 20th August, 1996, the said posts were missing;

(d) if so, the reasons for such omission and under whose authority the same was done; and

(e) the steps taken to implement the original decision of the Governing Body in this regard;

THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI CHATURANAN MISHRA): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) Yes, Sir,

(c) Yes, Sir.

(d) The orders for re-classification of Sr. Hindi Translator/Hindi Translator/ Jr.Hindi Translator into Technical category have been issued.

(e) No further action is required as orders have already been issued.

Conference of Agriculture Ministers

2102. SHRI AKHILESH DAS: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether he had recently inauguarated a conference in New Delhi which was attended by the Agriculture Ministers of all the States;

(b) if so, the issues discussed in the conference; and

(c) the decisions taken on the minimum programme of the Government?

THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI CHATURANAN MISHRA): (a) and (b) A Conference of State Agriculture Ministers was held at New Delhi on 19th February, 1997 to consider agricultural policy and related matters. The Prime Minister inaugurated the Conference.

(c) The Common Minimum Programme of the Government has already been finalised. The Conference was requested to give suggestions on abolition of regulations/controls which are in the way of increasing farmers incomes as well as on other aspects of Common Minimum Programme.

Communication facility to fiushermen regarding Cyclone

2103. SHRI O.S. MANIAN:
SHRI R. MAR GABANDU:

Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have plans to provide walkie-talkie sets to fishermen to forewarn them about impending cyclone; and

(b) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI CHATURANAN MISHRA): (a) and (b) A project under the Technical Cooperation Programme of the Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations entitled "Training in the Sea Safety Development Programme" has been approved for implementation in the coastal area of East Godavari Districts of Andhra Pradesh with an outlay of US$ 316000. This pilot project has provision for installing shore to boat communication system on fishing vessels, saftey equipment and live saving devices and outboard motors for selected beneficiaries. The project has provision for training of beneficiaries in the use and maintenance of the equipment.

Adverse Impact of Closure of Shrimp Farm

2104. SHRI SUSHILKUMAR SAM BHAJIRAO SHINDE:
SHRI RAJUBHAI A. PARMAR:
SHRIMATI VEENA VERMA:

Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether a large number of workers employed in over 2000 shrimp-farms are likely to be thrown out of employment with the closure of these farms as per Supreme Court's order, besides its adverse impact on food-production and exports;

(b) if so, the number of persons to be so affected; and

(c) the steps taken to provide them with alternative employment and rehabilitate their families?

THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI CHATURANAN MISHRA): (a) to (c) A petition has been filed in the Supreme Court seeking review of the judgement of the Supreme Court. The matter is subjudice.

Schemes for Promotion of Horticulture

2105. SHRI JOY NADUKKARA: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) the schemes to promote Horticulture in the country; and

(b) whether Government are proposing to give some subsidy to the persons engaged in Horticulture?

THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI CHATURANAN MISHRA): (a) and (b) For the promotion of horticulture in the country, various schemes relating to development of fruits, vegetables, floriculture, mushroom, coconut, cashewnut, spices, cocoa, areacanut, betelving and promoting use of plastic in horticultural crops, are being implemented. Under these schemes various type of assistance/subsidies are already being provided to the farmers for improving production/productivity of different crops.

Fall in Foodgrains Production

2106. DR. ALLADI P. RAJKUMAR: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the Economic Survey has indicated a 3–4% fall in Foodgrains production;

(b) whether the fall in Foodgrains production may result in increase in prices and also necessitate imports; and

(c) if so, the details in this regard and the steps proposed to be taken by Government to overcome the shortfall in production of Foodgrains?

THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI CHATURANAN MISHRA): (a) According to the Economic Survey 1996-97, the fall in foodgrains production in 1995-96 is 3.4 per cent a s compared to 1994-95. However, the production of foodgrains during 1996-97 has been assessed to be 191.18 million tonnes, which is 3.3 percent higher than that during 1995-96.